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FEATURES

IN THE GARDEN: Finding the moisture in your soil is important

REED PUGH | IN THE GARDEN

November 6, 2024 . 1:00 PM — 2 min read

Garden expert Reed Pugh suggests that you dig down into your gardens to find out the moisture of the soil before you put your plants to bed for the winter. COURTESY PHOTO/REED PUGH

Across most of New England, we are classified as “abnormally dr
“moderate drought” with northern and more central New Englan

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being OK.

Take a look at the U.S. Drought Monitor to see how our area is doing. Winchester and the Greater Boston area is solidly in the "moderate drought" category. Typically, the fall brings rain with the cooler weather, but we have been dry since July.

You can also see from the Blue Hill Observatory that rainfall for July, August and September has been well below the 130-year mean.

Mike Iacono, chief scientist at the observatory, was able to preview the precipitation for October for me with the following statement: "We have one more chance for a little light rain Tuesday night, so these are not final numbers, but the October rainfall at BHO is 0.53 inches (through 10/28), well below the 30-year normal of 5.49 inches.

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"The total for the September and October is 2.36" with a normal of 9.55" and the total is for July through October is 7.89" with a normal of 16.93. So we're about nine inches in deficit (and now officially in a moderate drought) since July. Each of these time periods will be among the driest on record."

So what's my point? While last year and this spring were very wet, causing lots of fungal issues, going into the winter with plants in dry soil can be very damaging, if not fatal, especially plants that were planted over the past three or four years.

Before you put away your hoses, I strongly suggest you get out there and provide a deep watering to your plants, especially plants that are new in your garden. If you've been watering well during the seas

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this shouldn't be a real concern, but you may have some special ornamental trees and plants that were not well attended to or irrigated.

I have been talking about watering in several recent newsletters, so if your soil is dry, then make sure to provide a good, deep watering now. With plants going dormant, and the cooler weather, we don't have to worry about the soil drying out quickly. This isn't something that has to be done more than once or twice, depending upon how recently plants were planted and if we get any rain before the ground freezes.

For those who have added native plants to their gardens, that are better adapted to our New England climate, they are not necessarily able to withstand significant drought that is not normal for our region, especially if planted in the past few years.

As I have suggested before, if you aren't sure how dry your soil is, get a shovel or trowel and dig down 6 to 12 inches to see what moisture is in your soil.
Enjoy the beautiful weather over the next few days and help put your plants to bed for winter.

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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

March 4, 2026

FEATURES

Celebrating Black history and culture with art, reflection, and community

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Winchester community came together last week at the Griffin Museum of Photography for the inaugural Black History and Culture Celebration, an evening filled with music, student creativity, and powerful messages about equity, unity, and the enduring legacy of Black

March 3, 2026

FEATURES

Winchester residents share more snow photos

Well, Winchester, we made it through the weekend with only a coating of snow that

FEATURES

Winchester Community Music School set to expand, upgrade

The big events in Winchest Music School always take place in Nichols

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amounted to nothing on Sunday afternoon. But during the Feb. 22-23 blizzard, Winchester News once again asked residents to send their snow photos. And here is what we received! Solmaz Amirnazmi said her daughters and

NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY | STAFF WRITER

March 2, 2026

Performance Hall. With the school and its performances' growing in popularity, the hall and many of its amenities are due for an upgrade. The performance hall is one of the main areas that the school seeks to

TAVISHI CHATTOPADHYAY | CORRESPONDENT

February 26, 2026

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EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

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SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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